



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

### Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

### About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>

GENERAL LIBRARY

OF

University of Michigan

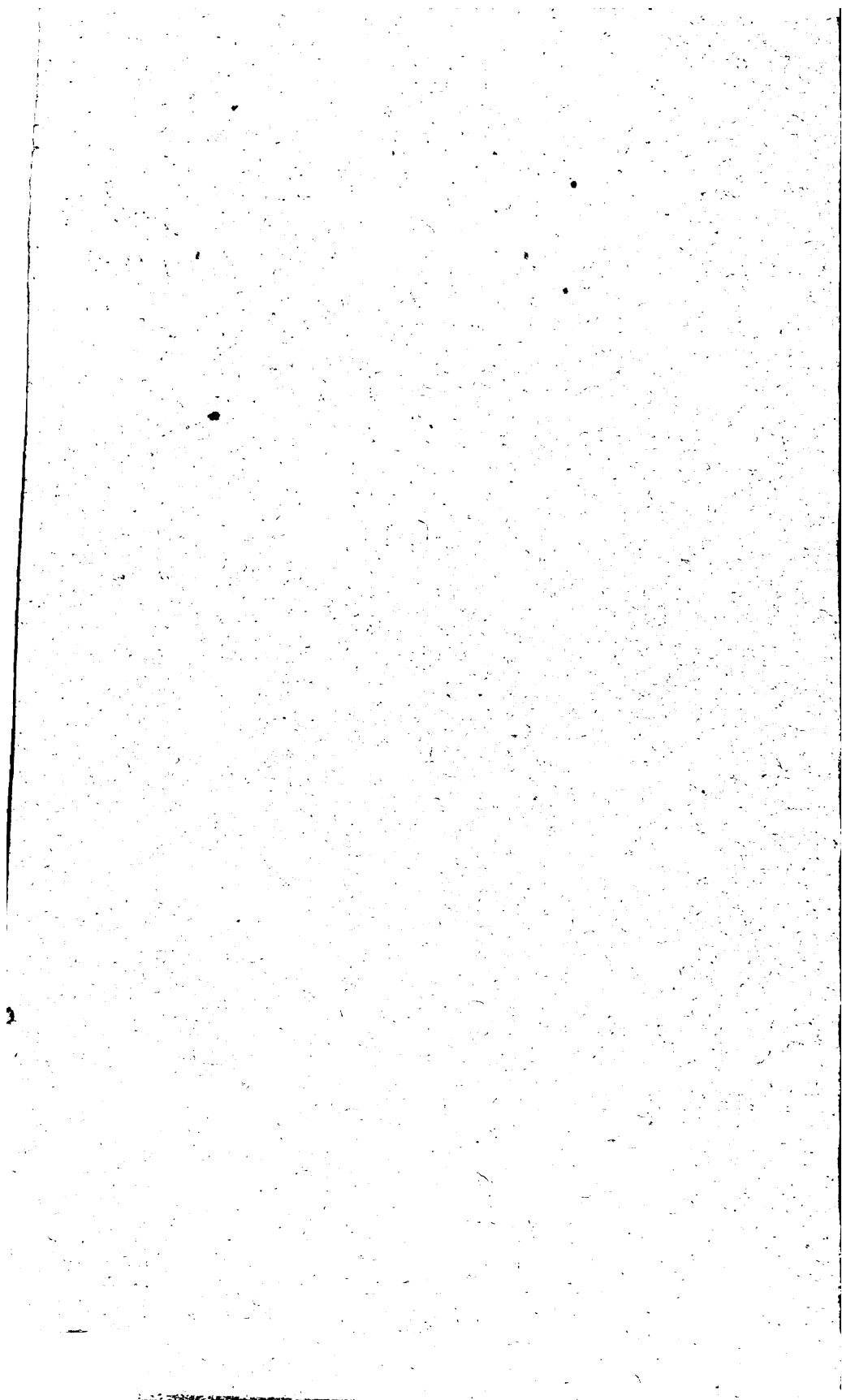
Presented by

Dr. S. A. Green

1/24/94

1900

BX  
9861  
B7  
C57



*from Dr. D. A. Green*  
*Page 140 Blue* *Jan 24 54*  
The Church.....as it was, as it is, as it ought to be.

---

A

# DISCOURSE

DELIVERED AT THE

DEDICATION OF THE CHAPEL,

BUILT BY THE

CHURCH OF THE DISCIPLES,

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 15, 1848.

---

By JAMES FREEMAN CLARKE,

PASTOR OF THE CHURCH.

---

BOSTON:

PUBLISHED BY BENJ. H. GREENE,

124 Washington Street.

1848.

**ANDREWS & PRENTISS, PRINTERS,**  
**No. 11 Devonshire Street.**

# DISCOURSE.

---

MATTHEW XVI. 18.

ON THIS ROCK WILL I BUILD MY CHURCH.

It has lately been remarked by a continental writer, that the great Theological Question of the present century will be the Church Question. "For," says he, "it is the only one which remains. The first three centuries were occupied with questions of *Theology proper*; that is, concerning God—his nature, attributes, character—the Trinity, the Incarnation. The succeeding centuries were occupied in discussing the question of *Anthropology*; that is, concerning Man—his condition, sinfulness, weakness, limitations, and needs. With the Reformation came the question of *Soterology*; that is, concerning justification, regeneration, salvation. Now," says he, "there remains but this question of *Ecclesiology*; that is, concerning the Church—its idea, methods, and organization."

Whether this mode of proof be convincing or otherwise, the fact I believe to be certain. The CHRISTIAN

CHURCH—as it was—as it is—as it ought to be ;—this subject becomes more and more interesting every year. The tendency of the age draws our minds toward it ; for in all things the present century tends toward union, harmony, synthesis, as plainly as the last century tended to division, individualism, analysis. We see this in the material world, in those inventions which make the inhabitants of the Atlantic coast a neighbor to the dweller on the Andes. We notice it in science, in the universal disposition to look at the analogies and harmonies of the Universe, and to trace one Plan running through the thousandfold varieties of Nature. In industrial life we seek for Combined Labor, where formerly Division of Labor was the watchword. So in religion, the Church Question ; that is, the question of *Christian Union and Coöperation* is beginning to have an especial interest. Men are growing weary of an excessive Individualism. They feel the loneliness of a merely independent thought and action. They say with the Poet,—

“ Me this unchartered freedom tires.”

They feel also the need of sympathy and support under the responsibilities of life. So some would turn back to a Mother Church, and sit at her feet, and rest their overstrained conscience by accepting duties from her hands, instead of seeking them for themselves. They find a pleasure in limits instead of liberty. Others, again, taking up this *Church Question*, on the

other side, seeking a larger union than that of any existing denomination, would make a new Church out of the whole Human Race. All Christian Churches which exist are so inadequate, that they will not allow that they are even *steps*, by which to reach a better, but regard them rather as impediments and stumbling blocks, to be removed as soon as possible.

Let us also look at this question. First, *Historically*; then, *Critically*; then, *Prospectively*.

Jesus is reported to have referred to a Church, *by name*, only on two occasions — once when speaking of difficulties between brethren, when he says, “Tell it to the Church”; and again in our text. Here he places the Confession of Peter — the deep conviction which Peter had and uttered, that his Master was God’s Christ; he places this as the solid foundation on which *his Church* should rest. He therefore believed that his disciples were about to constitute an Association — a united body, whose principle of union would be faith in him; and his prophetic mind looked down the far distances of the future, and saw this Association deepening its roots and spreading abroad its branches until the birds of the air — the wandering and homeless spirits — should find a home in it.

Instead of asking whether Jesus founded a Church, ask whether he did not evidently foresee that his disciples would unite together in an Association, the object of which should be to spread his gospel from

land to land. This question is easily answered—answered by his sending them out two and two, by his parables of the mustard-seed, and of the net, and by a multitude of his discourses. Jesus foresaw that this would be the case, he intended that it should be the case—for such an Association was a necessary means to his end, and such an Association lay as a necessity in the very nature of the gospel.

And when it came, it came as a necessity. The apostles and disciples did not found a Church, but they found themselves in a Church. They were driven together by outward persecution—they were drawn together by an inward impulse. Read the first chapters of the Book of Acts and see how the Church of Christ was formed. Those disciples and women who had attended Jesus in his journeys and constituted his family, *kept together* after his resurrection. One great thought filled all their minds, one commanding truth ruled their lives. They had known Jesus, and the memory of his life and truth filled to overflowing their intellect; the influence of his wonderful character was stamped upon theirs forever. Another and more mysterious influence had changed them inwardly—had given them courage for cowardice—heroism for weakness—a commanding eloquence in place of a stammering timidity. “*We cannot but speak of the things that we have seen and heard.*” Herein lay the necessity of the Church. The Church at first was an *Ecclesia Docens* very literally,

a missionary Church altogether, a Church devoted in every member and person to preaching Christ, the Saviour, the Redeemer of men.

Men under the law of such a necessity as this must keep together, must work in union — how could it be otherwise? Gathered out of a social life composed of the hard bigotry of the Pharisee, the cold scepticism of the Sadducee, or the desperate sensuality of Heathenism — and finding within their souls such a faith in an entire salvation from sin — a new life of love — free, earnest, ennobling — having such a sympathy, and such a common aim — here was laid the basis of the most noble friendship. Well might each repeat to the rest what Christ had said to them all: “Behold my mother and my brethren. For whosoever will do the will of God, the same is my mother and sister and brother.”

The early Church was thus a household of faith; a family of brothers and sisters. How touching the description of that first love! “The multitude of them that believed were of one heart and one soul; neither said any of them that aught that he possessed was his own, but they had all things in common.”

The favorite idea with the first Christians of the work of the Church, was this: that it was to replace Christ's body — it was to be the earthly body by which his ascended spirit should still speak, teach, and act in the world, still heal the sick, raise the dead, cast out devils, and bless mankind. Every Christian

was a living member of this body while in communion with the rest, and his life was received from Christ — “he lived by faith in the Son of God.” The Lord’s Supper was the bond of union and brotherhood. “The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we, being many, are one bread and one body, for we all are partakers of that *one* bread.” Hence the argument for mutual toleration. As the foot and hand and eye and tongue have each a different office, yet all are necessary to the integrity of the body, so may the various tendencies of character and opinion among Christians be controlled toward a common aim by that living faith in Christ which is the principle of life in all.

The organization of the early Church was partly adopted from that of the Jewish synagogue worship, and was partly originated as any necessity occasioned it. We happen to have an instance of this in the origin of the office of deacons. “In those days (we read in Acts vi.) when the number of disciples increased, there rose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews because their widows were neglected in the daily ministrations. Then the twelve called the multitude together and said: It is not reason that we should leave the word of God and serve tables. Wherefore, look out men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. And the saying

pleased the whole multitude," and so they chose certain persons.

We see, in this instance, how gradually the organization of the early Church arose. It was not fixed immutably from the first in Canons and Rubrics by the apostles — but each part of it came when it was wanted, and was based on the reason of each particular case, and was confirmed by the assent of the whole multitude.

Such was the Church of Christ at first — simple in its organization, noble in its aim, full of a profound life and an immense energy. Its only Creed was Faith in Christ. Its organization was flexible, enlarging as its wants were multiplied. It was a living, loving, and working Church.

Now let us pass on. Many centuries go by, and instead of that simple body of earnest believers, we now find an immense and consolidated Organization — a powerful Hierarchy — spread through many lands, but bound together by the cohesive attraction belonging to a sacred order of persons. It had noble Cathedrals, every stone of which was carved with reverence, and laid with religious awe.

"The hand that rounded Peter's dome,  
And groined the aisles of Christian Rome,  
Wrought in a sad sincerity.  
Himself from God he could not free.  
He builded better than he knew;  
The conscious stone to beauty grew."

So that we repeat to-day, in these our edifices, the ideas of those Mediæval Christians; and until we can build something to express the Christian ideas of our own age, we cannot do better than repeat theirs. This Church had a solemn ritual, adapted to every part of human life. It met the newborn babe at its entrance into the world, washed from its brow the taint of hereditary evil, and placed those tender feet in the way of salvation. It blessed the marriage vow of love, and invested the earthly tie with the sanctity of a diviner meaning. It opened its solemn Cathedrals, as sanctuaries for the sinner—it opened a listening ear for the confessions of the penitent, and gave him pardon—it gave in the Eucharist a present God as food for the soul—it brought to the sick bed a sacred comfort, touched the forehead of the dying with the sign of safety—it laid the dead in a consecrated grave. Did youth grow sick of youthful folly, did the maiden long for more than a virgin sanctity—it opened its Religious Houses, where in the calm pursuits of piety life might move upward as it moved onward—upward toward an eternal joy. Thus beneficent and tender toward its children, the Church was awful in its rebuke of the tyrant and the oppressor. It planted its foot on the neck of the despot, and restrained him whom no other force could check. It collected libraries, and opened schools, and taught sciences to a barbarous people, and stood a beacon light of knowledge in a benighted age. Such was



the aspect of the Christian Church in its second principal epoch.

For many centuries this great Organization was the efficient instrument of spreading Christian truth through the world. Never realizing its Idea, it often approached it; and its essential defects long lay concealed. But at last it appeared that the Catholic Church, in working out the formula, "Many members but one body," had caused the unity of the body to oppress and destroy the individuality of the members. The Catholic Church in attaining union had lost freedom. And with the loss of individual freedom also went sincerity and depth of intellectual and moral life. Force and fraud usurped the office of reason. The *teaching Church*, instead of convincing men of the truth of its doctrines, cheated them into an outward conformity or burnt them at the stake for a sincere utterance of their unbelief. Outward pomp and power took more and more the place of inward piety and love. All felt that something was wrong — none knew how the wrong was to be righted. Then God sent the Reformation, as he sends a storm to purify a stagnant and corrupting atmosphere.

In the Protestant Church the principle of individual conscience, personal freedom, and independent religious life again found its utterance. The idea of individual responsibility was revived, and with it came a new moral life — pure and healthy as the breezes which sweep over the hills on an October morning.

This idea was salt, to save the world from corruption. The Protestant Reformation was as necessary to renew the moral life of mankind, as Christianity was at first. Without Christianity, the world was going to ruin. Without the Reformation, the Church was going to ruin.

I know the defects of Protestantism. They are apparent. In working out the formula — “Many members, but one body,” Protestantism saves the variety of the members, but loses the unity of the body. *In attaining Freedom, it loses Union.* Hence narrowness, ultraism, bigotry, sectarianism. Hence weakness, and inefficiency in every part, according to the law, that “if one member suffers all suffer,” — if one member is isolated, and rejected from the communion of the rest, the life of all is weakened and impaired, for each need all, and all need each.

These evils are now seen and felt by all Protestants. All feel that our disunion will be sooner or later our destruction. Various remedies are proposed, most of them sufficiently superficial. The most common is the sectarian prescription — “let all other sects join mine — all other denominations be merged in mine.” This we need not dwell upon. It is not only impossible for all Protestant denominations to be merged in one, but if it could be, it would bring only a swifter destruction. If the whole body were the eye, where were the hearing? Nor need we dwell on such shallow devices as the Evangelical Alliance. Two main

tendencies have resulted from the divisions of Protestantism ; one, a backward tendency toward Romanism, the other a forward tendency toward a yet greater Individualism. Let us dwell for a moment on each of them.

In individual instances where our friends and acquaintances join the Romish Church, there may be reason either to be glad of it or to grieve. If they join the Church of Rome because they need its peculiar influence for their own good, if never having found peace in Christ elsewhere they do find it there, ought we not to rejoice in such a result ? Why should we doubt that some minds are better fitted to find a personal union with God by the methods of the Catholic Church than by any other ? But there are other cases for which we may well grieve, in which these methods are accepted as substitutes for an interior faith, and a partisan rancor and proselyting zeal are the bitter evidences of their wilfulness. In such cases the proselyte is made ten-fold more a child of hell than before. The sense of truth is blunted, the conscience is seared, and the inward eye closed against the sight of God and the Saviour.

Meantime, the main tendency toward Romanism must be regarded as only an eddy in the stream of the Church's progress. Rome has tried its experiment—tried it under the most favorable circumstances, tried it when it had the whole world for its theatre, when it could silence every voice of opposition—it

tried its experiment and failed. Its claim, then, to be the only true Church, the only way to God, the only medium of the Holy Spirit, has been denied by God, and can never be established. To prove that out of its communion there is no salvation, it must also prove that out of its communion there is no goodness. It must prove that the piety which in all Protestant lands has sweetened life, and made death full of peace, is no real piety; that the humane and benevolent enterprises which have sprung up in Protestant lands have no Christian element in them. It must prove that Taylor and Milton, Baxter, Wesley, Penn, and ten thousand more, were neither Christians nor good men. For there is no real goodness except from God, and if these men had no legitimate access to God, their goodness must be false and unreal. It must also prove that the moral condition of those countries in which the Catholic Church has always been the established religion, and from which Protestantism was originally extirpated, and has been always excluded, is infinitely better than that of those lands where Protestantism has always prevailed. That is, it must prove that Italy, and Portugal, and Spain have a higher moral life than Prussia, England, and New England. But the lessons of History and the facts before our eyes are not thus to be set aside. God has judged the Catholic Church by his providence, which called up Protestantism;—He weighed it in his balance, and found it wanting. The world will not

go back to Romanism, therefore, nor renounce Freedom again, even for the sake of Union.

The other tendency of which I spoke is toward a greater Individualism. There are now among us religious men, who think that no visible Church is needed ; who think that Churches are of no use ; that they rather hinder than help the Progress of Humanity. They would abolish all Churches, and substitute for them Reform Associations, or solitary religion. They accuse the Church of being the bulwark of Slavery, the support of War, and as stupifying men's consciences toward the great moral evils of the age. I do not wonder that these charges are brought against the Church. I wish there were less foundation for them than there is. The Church, in past times, has thought its especial business to be to promote piety, not to promote humanity. It has attempted that which the Apostle John pronounced impossible — to love God, whom it has not seen, without loving Man, whom it has seen. It has suffered enormous social evils to spring up and spread and corrupt the heart of Society, without exerting its great influence to remove them. Every Lord's day twenty thousand congregations assemble to worship God, and listen to Christian instruction in these United States. Twenty thousand ministers stand up to teach the people their duties to God and to man—to explain the Christian law of love. And yet this Christian people, with a Bible in almost every house, with a

minister within reach of almost every family, holds *three millions* of men in bondage—in a bondage which turns man into a brute, which deadens the intellect, depraves the heart, promotes the foulest licentiousness, educates white men and women to habits of tyranny and cruelty. More than this. By the natural advance of moral convictions the human mind is led to see the iniquity of this system—the heart of the age begins to cry out against it in all civilized lands. What do the American clergy? They begin, many of them, to find excuses and justifications for it. They search the records of history to find examples in a superseded dispensation, and precedents in the childhood of the race, by which to uphold its practice in the full light of Christianity. They

“Torture the pages of the blessed Bible,  
To sanction crime, and robbery, and blood;  
And in oppression's hateful service, libel  
Both Man and God.”

Nor is this all. Slavery, weak through its inherent corruptions, and feeling its power giving way before the advancing tide of public sentiment, determines to seize a new and virgin soil to contaminate with its varied pollutions. The majority of the American people assist it to accomplish this design. Intoxicated with success, the nation grasps at more of conquest, and using the flimsiest pretexts, invades the territory of a feeble sister State, overruns its soil, defeats its

armies, batters down its cities, and finally compels it to yield a third of its territory by which to purchase a peace. A vote of thanks is proposed to the Generals who have led these piratical expeditions of blood and ruin. In the American Senate but one man is found to say *No* to this proposal! But the friends of freedom say, "One thing, at least, we may do — this new territory can be protected from the inroads of Slavery. None is there now — none need come." In the American House of Representatives, this last feeble attempt at freedom is lost by a vote of one hundred and five to ninety-two; a large number of Northern men voting against it. And this is the nation which listens every Lord's day to fifty thousand sermons! A nation, whose two great parties resemble in their behaviour the two sons in our Master's parable, the one of whom flatly refused to obey his father's order, and the other said, "I go, sir, and went not;" but with a difference — for the one party boldly advocates and actively supports an unjust war, and does *not afterwards repent*, the other denounces the war in words but supports it by its actions. The one maintains that it is right and glorious, the other maintains that it is unjust and wicked, and then proposes to take the General who has carried it on and make him President. What has the Church been teaching for these two hundred years, that *these* are the results of its teaching? I will tell you what. It has *not* been explaining the Sermon on the Mount,

nor the parable of the Good Samaritan. No. It has been proving the doctrine of the Trinity or Unity, arguing for and against Vicarious Atonement, for and against Total Depravity, for and against Infant Baptism. The weightier matters of the law, the real substance of the Bible, have been postponed to these debates. It has been building its house with wood, hay, and stubble. Otherwise such an amount of moral blindness and sin in our people were impossible. And why has this been the case? Because the Church has been always a *Church of the Clergy*, not a *Church of the People*; and because the clergy, as students and thinkers, will always lay a disproportionate stress on mere matters of theology.

Now I do not wonder that good men, seeing this result of Churches, should say—We were better without them! But not so. The need of Church union, Church action, is rooted in man's nature. Overthrow these Churches and you must provide others in their place, or men will make themselves others. But the Churches *have not been without their useful action*. Let us be just to all. The most sectarian, the most bigoted, the most antinomian Church does something to awaken the sense of responsibility in the human mind. It does not direct it, but it rouses it. The fault of the Church is that it has taken the first step, but stopped there. It has called up in man the sense of his infinite obligations, of his awful capacities, of his great dangers and his greater hopes. It has taken

him up out of a sensual life, immersed in things, to a life of ideas and principles. Destroy the Church, and you must still do this work before you can go any further. The Churches arouse the conscience, arouse the sense of religious obligation, and till that is awakened, vain would be the attempts of Reformers to promote a right moral feeling on particular subjects. I do not therefore sympathize with those who say, We want no Churches. My hope is not in the destruction of the Churches but in their advance, in progress to something better. I never hope anything from destructive and negative methods. I never look for any good in going backward. Let us ennoble, purify, reform and carry forward what we have. Let us accept what the Past has given us, and do what we may to improve it. Even Christianity, a supernatural religion and the beginning of a new order of life, did not fall out of the skies unprepared for. It grew out of the soil of Judaism, which had been made ready for it, and took up into itself the life and truth of all the Past. Every truly progressive movement must do the same.

This brings us to the third and last division of our Discourse, which is Prospective. *The Church as it is to be.* What will be the elements of the *Church of the Future?*

We have asserted that our Protestant Churches cannot go back to Romanism, nor forward into Individualism and No-Churchism. Nor can they remain

where they are, in their present state of division and opposition. Sooner or later they must come together. The *Church of the Future* must therefore be a *comprehensive Church*, taking into itself as independent but harmonizing elements all the tendencies which now appear embodied in separate sects. But they cannot unite on any narrow ground, nor upon any compromise or concession of their particular ideas. They must become large enough to admit, each its own limitations, each to confess its own narrowness, each to own a peculiar excellence in the others which may meet and supply its own deficiency. They must understand the deep meaning of the Apostolic Idea — “many members, one body.” They must believe in Providence, and if a movement comes, bending the minds of men in one direction, as the ripe wheat bends before the breeze, they must accept in this movement a Providential meaning, instead of rejecting it as a new outbreak of heresy. They must be able to distinguish such a movement, coming spontaneously and universally, from the effects of human wilfulness, brought about by artificial combinations and manœuvres.

Guided by this spirit, the Future Church will receive into itself the three leading parties of our own community. I mean the Orthodox, the Unitarians, and the Spiritualists. Each will find in the others a peculiar element in which it is itself deficient. Each

will retain what is positive and peculiar to itself, but give up what is merely negative and antagonistic.

Shall I say now what Orthodoxy has, in which we, as Unitarians, are deficient? It understands the meaning of the Gospel, as differing from the Law, better than we do, and sees its special adaptation to the needs of the sinner, as we have not generally apprehended it. It sees that God actually came into the world in Christ, infusing a new life-element, commencing a new movement, beginning a new series of influences. Hence it perceives that Christianity is really a supernatural gift, coming from above the natural order of things, and that those who receive it are actually born into a higher life. Thus it transforms duty into love; instead of a conscientious effort to do right, it creates a grateful affection, which carries us forward, as the advancing tide bears a navy on its bosom. It animates man with the power of faith in unseen and eternal things, and so gives an energy and force which no merely earthly considerations can produce.

Shall I as frankly speak of the defects of Orthodoxy — defects which the Unitarian movement was sent to supply? Orthodoxy undervalues man's nature and capacities; exalting the Son, it does not worship the Father; it does not see God in Nature, God in History, God in Providence. It creates a fervent piety, but is deficient in conscientiousness, in truthfulness, in a regard for man as man. Unitarianism, with all its

defects, can teach Orthodoxy a lesson. If it learns of Orthodoxy to see God in Christ, it may teach it to see *man in Christ*. It may teach it humanity while it learns piety, may teach it conscientiousness while it learns penitence and faith. And if that seems a small matter, remember that Christianity did not differ from previous religions by creating a more fervent piety so much as in creating a deeper and purer humanity.

So, too, the Transcendental or Spiritual Movement of our day must be accepted and received by the comprehensive Church. It will be received, not for its denials or negations, but for its noble sight of an infinite worth in man, of a divine power in the human soul. Man, trampled into the earth by the crushing heel of the tyrant, is lifted up and placed a little lower than the angels as soon as God's ideas are found in him. That God is now in the world, that he is now in our hearts, that he is ready now to inspire us by his Spirit, that he is uniformly near, the light within us, the life of our life — these are the teachings of Transcendentalism, for the sake of which we can easily overlook its extravagant opposition to miracles, and what seems to me its unreasonable denial of the supernatural element in history.

Does any one think it impossible that the Church shall ever realize in its large hospitality such diverse doctrines? I say that if the Jewish Prophets, hundreds of years before Christ's coming, dared to predict an age in which the sword should be beaten into a

plough-share and the spear into a pruning-hook and nations no longer wage war together,—we Christians, nearly two thousand years *after* Christ may dare to anticipate a time in which Christian sects may be comprehended in one fold, and coöperate toward a common end. If Isaiah could say that the lion and the lamb should feed together, we may say that at some indefinite period of the future even the Unitarian and the Trinitarian may stand together on a common platform.\*

That common platform is indeed already laid—that foundation was placed when the words of our text were first spoken. “Faith in Christ” is the bond of union—the one article of the Church’s creed. This was the basis of the Apostolic Church, and to this basis we must return. That stone, so often refused by the builders, who have despised it for its simplicity, must become again the head stone of the corner. Whatever sect, whatever individual, accepts Christ as the Master, stands on the foundation and is within the limits of the true Church.

There can be no union among Protestants till they agree to this as the one basis of union. No Protestant sect, as a sect, does now agree to it. The Orthodox demand, not only that we Unitarians should take Christ for our Master and go to him for truth, but that

\* The leading idea in the preceding train of remarks corresponds with that of Dr. Bushnell’s late admirable Essay on “Christian Comprehensiveness.”

we should agree to accept certain doctrines as truth which they call the essential and peculiar doctrines of Christianity. But this is virtually substituting themselves in the place of Christ as our teachers, and shows that either they have no faith in the power of their doctrines to convince an honest seeker, or that they do not believe in our honest intentions—i. e. they want either faith in God, or faith in man. Nor are Unitarians, as a body, willing to take faith in Christ as the basis of union, for many of them insist on knowing the grounds on which a man believes before they will accept him as a Christian. If he does not believe in Christ, on the basis of miracles, having doubts of their reality, though he may believe fully in Christ on the ground of the truth which he taught, and accept him as a perfect teacher, many Unitarians will call him a Deist and Infidel. This is giving to outward miracles an importance which neither Augustine, the father of Catholic theology, nor Luther, the father of the Reformation, ever gave to them, and which even the Jewish Rabbins would not ascribe to them.\*

\* In the Talmud is the following story, to show that miracles are not to be regarded as legitimate evidences of Truth.

A violent debate arose in the Rabbinical school between Rabbi Eliezer and an opponent, concerning the doctrine of clean and unclean beasts. Rabbi Eliezer brought all possible arguments to support his opinion, and at last, finding them ineffectual, cried, "May this apple tree show that I am right." Whereupon the apple tree moved, and left its place, and was thrown to a distance.

"Well," said the opponent, "What does that prove?"

Faith in Jesus as the Christ is therefore to be the basis of the Future Church? What is to be its office?

It will be a Working Church. It will be employed, not in circulating a creed, not in building up a sect, not in going through with religious forms, but the

"Then" returned Rabbi Eliezer, "if you believe not the tree, may this brook show that I am right."

Whereupon the brook stopped, and began to run backward.

"But what does water, running backward, prove?" said the unconvinced opponent.

"Then may the walls of this room prove that I am right," said Eliezer.

The corners of the house were shaken and the walls began to totter.

But Eliezer's opponent cried, "Walls! walls! why do you interfere in the discussions of the wise?" And the walls, bowing in obedience to one wise man, rose again and stood firm out of reverence for the other.

"May then the voice of God decide between us!" said Eliezer. And from the depths of the Heaven a voice was heard to speak, and to say, "Why contend against my servant Eliezer? He alone is right!"

But Rabbi Joshua arose, and replied to the voice, "It is not in Heaven!" quoting from the passage in Deuteronomy, which says, "My word is not hidden from thee, nor afar off. It is not in Heaven, that thou shouldst say, Who shall go up to Heaven for us and bring it unto us, that we may hear it and do it. But the word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it."

And God was pleased with Joshua, who believed in the inward word of God in his heart, more than in outward signs and wonders.

This story I find in "Engel," quoted as from the Talmud. I believe that the miracles of the gospels are not myths but matters of fact, for they seem to me reasonable, natural, and beautiful manifestations of the character of Jesus Christ. I am not alarmed at hearing them doubted. I am sure the Church will never give up her faith in them. But I do not believe that Jesus ever intended that a belief in them should be made a test of discipleship. Miracles are to be believed on the ground of Christianity, not Christianity on the ground of miracles. So says Augustine, so says Luther; so *feels* every spiritual man, however he may have been taught a different opinion.

Church will work in all its parts to do that which Christ did when he was here below. To give eyes to the blind and feet to the lame, to heal the sick and to raise the dead, to cure the foul leprosy of society, to heal the deep wounds of the troubled heart, to clear the pathway of the doubter, to aid the sinner to return to God and virtue, — to this will the Church of the Future devote its whole energy. What would be the result here in Boston, if all the sects, laying aside their jealousies, should coöperate together for a single year, with combined action, to remove the *Intemperance*, the *Licentiousness*, the *Ignorance*, the *Poverty* of this community? What would be the effect if all sects throughout the South should combine their energies to abolish slavery there? Before such a combination what evil could maintain itself? Then would the Church not only repeat in its prayer, “*Thy kingdom come,*” but would carry out its prayer into action, and see this long deferred reign of Christ commencing below.

Of the organization of the Future Church I will not undertake to speak. It seems to me that it will be various, that it will in some of its parts admit the solemn rites and symbolic forms of Catholicism, in others the simplicity of the Quaker. Its organization may sometimes include our industry and take in all parts of our life, but in other circumstances confine itself to directing our moral enterprises, and carrying on special reforms. But I think that in the Future

Church the distinction between clergy and laity will altogether cease, for this distinction does not belong to Christianity, but was imported into it from Judaism. In the early Church all were clergy and all laity, all priests and all people. By one spirit all had been baptized into one body, and no clerical order is intimated. The Church had its officers as any association must, but these officers did not form a class or clerisy. The Clergy-Church must be changed into the Church of the People, before the members can all feel their individual responsibility for the total action of the body. The ministry, worship, and preaching will remain, but the Church will not be built on the ministry but the ministry on the Church.

With these ideas and these principles, my friends, we united together, seven years ago, and established this Church of Disciples. We took that name in sincere humility. We wished to be scholars, learners, sitting at the feet of Jesus. We wished to unite together, to coöperate, to help each other onward and upward. Our Creed was Faith in Christ, and we were comprehensive enough to include in our body many varieties and even extremes of opinion. Your minister was one of yourselves; he claimed no pre-eminence, he assumed no official authority, he wished that all the brethren should occupy the pulpit, he wishes and hopes for it still. A band of brothers and friends, we sought for a deeper religious life, for a larger view of truth, for a better habit of active good-

ness. So we began ; so, I think, in some measure, we have gone on. We have met with changes, with some severe trials. We have lost, in a variety of ways, a very large body of our best members. As I look around, half of those who were with us at first are no longer here. But our principles are here, our ideas stand fast ; and to those ideas and principles I wish steadily to adhere. We have not been faithful to them. We have taken too light a view of our duties toward them. We have not gone deeply enough into the religious life, nor been willing enough to deny ourselves and labor for the sake of our Church. We have never been popular, for we ran counter to many prejudices ; to the prejudices of the Conservatives, and to the prejudices of the Reformers. We could not be one-sided, narrow or ultra ; nor could we be lukewarm and neutral. So many of our friends have left us from time to time, offended with one thing or another in our conduct and course. But I believe I may say that not one ever left us in anger, nor is there to-day a shadow of coolness between us and our former brethren. This, at least, is something for which to be grateful.

And now we enter to-day into this new house, which is to be our own home. Its simple but harmonious forms, its cheerful seriousness of character, harmonize well with our views of the nature of the religion which we wish here to study together. We wish and intend that these doors may be always open

to welcome the stranger, the feeble, the wretched. We wish and intend that here the rich and the poor may sit together, and the differences of rank and caste be forgotten. We wish that the fugitive slave, and the penitent prodigal may here feel themselves welcome, as they always have been. We have always rejoiced in open doors, in free seats, in having a Church composed not of the rich but of the poor as well. We shall sell no pews, nor put it into the power of any body of pew-holders to control the religious action of the Church. This Church has been built by the free and generous offerings of its members, who gave, hoping for nothing again, except the pleasure of knowing that they were providing for the accommodation of others as well as for their own.

And now, my friends, may this place be to us none other than the House of God and the Gate of Heaven ! May it become dear to us as the place where our best affections shall be unfolded, our purest hopes cultivated, new and better views of time and eternity attained. May Faith and Love and Hope abound in the midst of us. And though no candles burn before the altar, though no incense streams upward from the waving censer, may the Lamp of the Lord be here kindled, and the Incense of the heart arise here to Heaven.



# ORDER OF SERVICES.

---

## I.—INTRODUCTORY PRAYER.

BY REV. NATH'L HALL.

---

## II.—SELECTIONS FROM THE SCRIPTURES.

BY REV. E. PEABODY.

---

## III.—LORD'S PRAYER.

---

## IV.—HYMN.—PIERPONT.

O bow thine ear, ETERNAL ONE ;  
On Thee our heart adoring calls ;  
To Thee the followers of thy Son  
Bend low within these sacred walls.

Here let thy Holy Days be kept,  
And be this place to Worship given,  
Like that bright spot where Jacob slept, —  
The House of God, the Gate of Heaven.

Here may thine honor dwell ; and here,  
As incense, let thy children's prayer,  
From contrite hearts and lips sincere,  
Rise on the still and holy air.

Here be thy praise devoutly sung ;  
Here let thy Truth beam forth to save,  
As when, of old, thy Spirit hung,  
On wings of light, o'er Jordan's wave.

And when the lips, that with thy name  
Are vocal now, to dust shall turn,  
On others may Devotion's Flame  
Be kindled here, and purely burn.

## V. — SERMON.

BY THE PASTOR.

## VI — DEDICATION CHANT.

Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors, that the King of Glory may come in.

For except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it; except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain.

But will God indeed dwell upon earth? Behold the Heaven and the Heaven of Heavens cannot contain Him. How much less this house that we have builded!

For thus saith the Lord—the Heaven is my throne, and the Earth is my footstool. Where is the house ye build for me, and where is the place of my rest?

Open ye the gates, that the righteous nation, that keepeth the truth, may enter in. Lord! who shall abide in thy tabernacle; who shall stand in thy holy hill?

He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart. He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.

For the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth; for the Father seeketh such to worship Him.

God is a Spirit, and they who worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth. O! worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness; fear before Him, all the earth.

Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise; be thankful unto him, and bless his name.

For the Lord is good, his mercy is everlasting, and his truth endureth to all generations. — AMEN.

## VII — DEDICATION PRAYER.

*Minister.* — Infinite and Eternal Spirit, Thou dwellest not in temples made with hands, neither art worshipped by men's hands, as though Thou needest anything.

*Congregation.* — Behold! the Heaven and the Heaven of Heavens cannot contain Thee — how much less this house that

we have builded. Thou dwellest in light, inaccessible and full of glory; above all height, below all depth, surrounding, embracing, penetrating all being.

*Minister.* — Thou art not far from any one of us; for in Thee we live, and move, and have our being. Yet, when we meet together, we more fully feel thy presence. Be with us now, and help us, whose lives are rooted in Thee, to turn to Thee our souls, to give to Thee our hearts.

*Congregation.* — For without Thee we are nothing; away from Thee we can do nothing; forgetting Thee, all our work is empty, and will come to nothing.

*Minister.* — We have built this house to be a House of Prayer, a House of Thought, a House of Love and United Action. May we enter it with right intentions and wise aims. We now consecrate it, by solemn prayer and earnest purpose, to highest uses and universal ends.

*Congregation.* — It is no more ours — it belongs to Thee and to thy Son. Separated forever from private, selfish, sectarian, and party ends, may it be ever used to advance the cause of all Truth, all Love, all Goodness.

*Minister.* — We dedicate it to the Love of God — to pure worship, to sincere prayer, to a free and joyful piety, to a service of the Father, without formality, superstition, or hypocrisy.

*Congregation.* — When we here confess our sins, then hear Thou in Heaven, and be merciful to us sinners. When we gratefully bless thy goodness, accept Thou the love of thy children. In sorrow, in need, in darkness, in weakness, when we draw near to Thee, give to us, O our Father, light, strength, and peace.

*Minister.* — We dedicate this House to the Love of Man — to active goodness, to practical Christianity, to all that may bless and elevate human hearts and lives.

*Congregation.* — May we learn here to love one another, not in name and word only, but in deed and in truth. May the distinctions and prejudices which separate man from man never enter these walls. May we call no man common or unclean, but here learn to love our neighbor as ourselves.

*Minister.* — We dedicate this house to free and earnest thought — to the study of truth, to an ever increasing insight, to an ever advancing knowledge.

*Congregation.* — Here may we learn to know Thee, the Uni-

versal Father—to know Christ, the Saviour and Friend—to know ourselves, our needs and capacities—to know the Aim of Life, the law of duty, the bliss of the present, and the hope of the future.

*Minister.*—We dedicate this house to the Culture of the Soul—to its renewal, its elevation, purification, and redemption. We dedicate it to the Church, to brotherly love and Christian Union.

*Congregation.*—May this be the home of the highest aspiration and the largest love.

*Minister.*—Universal Father, we consecrate this place to Thee.

*Congregation.*—Our Father, bless this offering of thy children.

*Minister.*—Jesus, friend of Man, we devote this place to thee.

*Congregation.*—Teacher, Master, Saviour, be here to thy disciples the Way, the Truth, and the Life.

*Minister.*—To the Holy Spirit of purity and love, to the sweet breathing of God in our hearts, to the spirit of Christian communion, we devote this place.

*Minister and Congregation, together.*—Here may the little child be brought to Jesus—here may the young be helped to resist temptation—here may manly strength be given to goodness—here may the pathway of the aged be made smooth to the tomb—may the solitary, the friendless, the bereaved find here friendship and solace—may the mourner here be comforted—may the poor have the Gospel preached to them—may the rich be made rich toward God—may the sinner be awakened and find pardon—may many souls be born out of darkness into light, out of death into life. And while this house shall stand, may it be the home of that Divine Glory, which dwells in hearts filled with love, joy, and peace.

*Minister.*—Now unto the King, eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God,

*Congregation.*—Be honor and glory, through Jesus Christ, forever and ever.—AMEN.

---

#### VIII.—HYMN.—HEBER.

Holy, holy, holy, LORD GOD ALMIGHTY!

Early in the morning our song shall rise to Thee;

Holy, holy, holy! merciful and mighty!

All thy works shall praise thy name in earth, sky, and sea.

Holy, holy, holy ! all the saints adore Thee,  
 Casting down their golden crowns around the glassy sea ;  
 Cherubim and Seraphim, falling down before Thee,  
 Which wert, and art, and evermore shall be.

Holy, holy, holy ! though the darkness hide Thee,  
 Though the eye of sinful man thy glory may not see ;  
 Only Thou art holy ; there is none beside Thee,  
 Perfect in power, in love, and purity !

---

### IX. — CONCLUDING PRAYER.

BY REV. SAMUEL BARRETT.

---

### X. — BENEDICTION.

---

### NOTE.

The CHURCH OF THE DISCIPLES, in Boston, was formed in April, 1841, by the adoption of the following Declaration of Faith and Purpose, by a unanimous vote, as the basis of the Church.

"We, whose names are subscribed, unite together in the following faith and purpose :

*Our Faith is in Jesus, as the Christ, the Son of God.*

*And we hereby form ourselves into a Church of his Disciples, that we may coöperate together in the study and practice of Christianity."*

We called ourselves "Disciples," to express our wish to become scholars in the School of Christ, to sit at his feet, and learn what he had to teach us.

We united as a *Church*, not as a congregation of worshippers. Our object was to have but one organization, and that a religious organization. It should be large enough to include every one who, with faith in Christ, was seeking to know and to obey him, as the great object of life.

We adopted the *Social Principle*, desiring to study, and work, and pray in company ; to know each other ; to commune together, and to make one family of brethren and sisters in the Lord. For this purpose we have had social meetings of different kinds, constantly. We have met to examine questions of religion and morality. We have had Prayer and Conference Meetings. We have meetings for benevolent purposes. We have united, as a Church, in a Protest against the Mexican War. We have published and circulated tracts, to show the evils and wrong of slaveholding, and in other ways have endeavored to carry out the principle of social Christian coöperation.

The *Worship* of this Church has for seven years been strictly *Congregational*. The whole congregation have taken part in the prayers. The sing-

•••••